

**Religion and Media Interest Group  
Annual Report 2012-2013**

**Head**

**David W. Scott**  
Utah Valley University  
[scottdw@uvu.edu](mailto:scottdw@uvu.edu)

**Vice Head**

**Hwang Chen**  
Brigham Young University, Hawaii  
[chiung.chen@byuh.edu](mailto:chiung.chen@byuh.edu)

**PF&R Chair**

**Kyle Huckins**  
Indiana Wesleyan University  
[kyle.huckins@indwes.edu](mailto:kyle.huckins@indwes.edu)

**Research Chairs**

**John Wirtz**  
Texas Tech University  
[John.wirtz@ttu.edu](mailto:John.wirtz@ttu.edu)

**Myra German**  
[mgerman@desu.edu](mailto:mgerman@desu.edu)  
Delaware State University  
[mgerman@desu.edu](mailto:mgerman@desu.edu)

**Mid-winter Research Chair**

**Michael Ray Smith**  
Campbell University  
<mailto:smithm@campbell.edu>

**Teaching Chair**

**Jim Y. Trammell**  
High Point  
[jtrammell@highpoint.edu](mailto:jtrammell@highpoint.edu)

**Newsletter Editors**

**Paola Banchemo**  
University of Alaska, Anchorage  
<mailto:pbanchemo@uaa.alaska.edu>

**Debra Mason**  
University of Missouri  
[danson@missouri.edu](mailto:danson@missouri.edu)

## **STATEMENT:**

The Religion and Media Interest Group remains a vital subdivision of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, one in which educators explore and investigate the interrelationships and connections among media, religion, audiences and adherents. For the Washington D.C. meeting, we have a full complement of panels and refereed presentations that represent the broad and the deep connections our members focus on. That schedule includes papers on topics as different as social media and religion and the use of mass media in the public sphere by religious leaders and religious institutions.

## **GOALS:**

2013-2014 goals

1. Continue to encourage their RMIG members and graduate students to conduct research in religious faiths outside the U.S. context.
2. Continue newsletter rate of three per year
3. Grow the Interest Group by 10 percent

2012-2013 Goals & measures of success

1. Re-establish and revamp our newsletter and online presence.
2. Increase diversity within membership and among officers.
3. Strengthen our teaching outreach and planning beyond regular AEJMC meetings.
4. Increase submissions by 10 percent for the annual conference and 5 percent for the midwinter conference.

The 2012 conference had 35 submissions. In 2011 we had one paper presented at the midwinter conference, down from 5 presented in 2010. We hope to increase that number in 2012.

Increase diversity of research

Success in meeting 2012-2013 goals:

### **1) Newsletter**

This year we published two newsletters and are preparing letter #3 as this report is written.

Here is link to newsletter page:

<http://www.religionandmedia.org/2013-winter-newsletter/#3>  
<http://www.religionandmedia.org/summer-2012-newsletter-is-out/>

## **2) Diversity**

We have not seen any significant change in ethnicity among RMIG leadership. But we have broadened the scope of research to be more reflective of religious diversity (see below).

In terms of the diversity document. I have not received any information on ethnicity of people presenting on panels and I feel it inappropriate to assign ethnic labels on these people based on my own observations and potential biases.

## **3) Teaching**

I added a course at UVU titled Mormon Culture. This course was taught twice last year at Utah Valley University. No other reports on teaching from RMIG members are available at this time.

## **4) Research (volume and diversity)**

One of the 2012-2013 research goals of the Religion and Media Interest Group (as stated in past division chair reports and in RMIG business meetings) is to broaden the range of research conducted and presented at AEJMC. What that means in practice is to foster research that is not based solely in the U.S. media context and/or to foster research that is not focused solely on a Judeo-Christian tradition.

RMIG has definitely made progress in this area, as 14 of the 35 submitted papers (40%) related to some aspect of Islam, and 2 other papers related to a non-Christian religion. That means about half of the submissions relate to topics other than Christianity (broadly defined) and media. Further, the submissions related to Islam and media were strong enough again this year to merit a refereed paper session. Finally, a number of the papers examined issues (e.g., press coverage) outside the U.S.

Midwinter Conference: Four papers presented at mid-winter Conference in 2012, a 400% increase over 2011 conference. However, we fell short of the goal of five papers. However, given the flat economic state last year, we feel pretty good about this accomplishment. Below are the titles of the papers presented at this meeting.

1) William and Mary Apess: Mixed race representation and the social construction of race through communication and religion during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Kevin R. Kemper, Ph.D., J.D.

The University of Arizona

2) *Use of online social networking channels for religious communication: Examining the distinct role of Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Quest Religiosity under varied circumstances*

*Mian Asim, College of Journalism and Communication,*

*University of Florida*

3) The effective use of the new media in disseminating the evangelical message among catholic college students

Emmanuel Nduka and John McGuire  
Oklahoma State University

4) Death and taxes: How we use religion to navigate political decisions

Gwendelyn S. Nisbett  
University of North Texas and Lindsey A. Harvell, Southern Utah University

## **REPORT ON OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2012-13**

### **Research paper submissions for 2013 AEJMC**

A total of 35 completed research papers were submitted to the Religion and Media Interest Group and 18 were accepted. This resulted in an overall acceptance rate of 51.4%, well within range of the AEJMC guideline of a 50% acceptance rate.

There were 28 faculty papers submitted and 15 were accepted. The faculty paper acceptance rate was 53.5%.

There were 7 student papers submitted and 3 were accepted. The student paper acceptance rate was 42.8%.

### **Research paper competition for 2013 AEJMC**

The All-Academic review system was used to conduct the paper competition. All papers were read and evaluated by three reviewers.

There were 27 reviewers, and on average, reviewers received four papers to review. Of the 27 reviewers, 25 were faculty and 2 were advanced graduate students.

All papers were rated on seven criteria using a 5-point scale (1 = poor; 5 = excellent).

The criteria used were: 1) clarity of purpose; 2) clarity of research method; 3) appropriateness of research method; 4) evidence/results relate to purpose of paper; 5) evidence/results presented clearly; 6) makes original contribution to field; 7) relevance of focus to Religion/Media Interest Group.

Papers were accepted based on overall average score ranking relative to all papers submitted to RMIG, the accept/reject recommendation of the reviewers and discretion of the research co-chairs.

The top scoring faculty paper was awarded Top Faculty Paper. The title of the paper is "Having the Last Word, but Losing the Culture Wars: Mainstream Press Coverage of a Canceled Evangelical Benediction," by **Rick Moore** from Boise State University.

The top scoring graduate student paper was awarded Top Graduate Student Paper. The title of the paper is “Broadcasting Sharia: American TV News’ Illustration of Social Identity and the Emergence of a Threat.” Its authors are **Jennifer Hoewe**, Penn State; **Brian J. Bowe**, Michigan State; **Naheda Makhadmeh**, Michigan State

### **List of Reviewers and Affiliation**

Abrams, Mike	Florida A&M
Anokwa, Kwadwo	Butler
Bowe, Brian	Michigan State
Buddenbaum, Judith	Colorado State
Cobb, Lona	Winston-Salem State
Ferre, John Patrick	Louisville
German, Myna	Delaware State
Grimm, Josh	Louisiana State University
Hatcher, Anthony	Elon
Hoewe, Jennifer	Penn State University
Hollander, Barry	University of Georgia
Longinow, Michael	Biola
Mason, Debra	Missouri
Mendenhall, Doug	Abilene Christian University
Moore, Rick	Boise State
Pavlik, Kim	University of Scranton
Richardson, Kathy	Berry University
Sar, Sela	Iowa State
Smith, Jessica	Texas Tech
Smith, Michael	Campbell University
Sparks, Johnny	Central Michigan
Stempel, Guido	Ohio University
Sturgill, Amanda	Elon
Swanson, Doug	Cal-State Fullerton
Trammel, James	Highpoint
Williams-Hawkins, Maria	Ball State
Williams, John	Principia College

**OTHER REFERREED COMPETITIONS:** None

### **RESEARCH: SCHOLAR TO SCHOLAR**

RMIG was assigned three refereed research paper sessions and six slots at a scholar-to-scholar session.

The refereed paper sessions will be as follows:

Session 1: “Exploring Ways Religious Leaders and Institutions Integrate Social Media into Their Media Usage Patterns and Message Strategies.” Moderator: Jennifer Hoewe, Penn State;

discussant: Myna German, Delaware State University (Friday, Aug. 9; 8:15–9:45 a.m.).

Session 2: “Religion in the News: How the Mass Media Cover Religious Topics and Individuals who Practice Religion” (Top Paper Session). Moderator: Amanda Sturgill, Elon; discussant: Michael Longinow, Biola (Friday, Aug. 9; 11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.).

Session 3: “The Intersection of Islamic Religious Identity and Discourse as Reflected in Mass Media Content and Usage by Muslims.” Moderator: Kathy Richardson, Berry College; discussant: Judith Buddenbaum, Colorado State (Saturday, Aug. 10; 1:45–3:15 p.m.).

The theme of the scholar-to-scholar session is “Religious Communication in the Public Sphere: Practical Applications and Theoretical Explorations.” The discussants are John G. Wirtz, Illinois and Debashis “Deb” Aikat, North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Saturday, Aug. 10; 12:15–1:30 p.m.)

## **OUT OF CONFERENCE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

### **RESEARCH**

Members of RMIG have presented papers at other venues such as International Communication Association, and the National Communication Association.

### **TEACHING:**

It is in the interests of the students we are training to be taught by faculty and led by administrators who have given thoughtful consideration to excellence in curricular matters, course content and teaching methods, and teaching performance. To this end, the Teaching Committee of AEJMC urges divisions and interest groups to include activities concerning curriculum, leadership, course content and teaching methods, and assessment.

For the 2013 AEJMC Conference RMIG is co-sponsoring a teaching panel with VISC and CCS. This panel exams the role of memorials and visual representations of national memory as a means of examining religion as a collective and cultural experience.

### **Teaching Goals**

RMIG aims to enhance the resources, knowledge and activity of our members by offering new and creative ways for them to teach more effectively. Planned articles on teaching in past newsletters and our intent to forge continued collaborations with other AEJMC divisions and interest groups will help us reach these goals.

In addition, we frequently pursue partnerships in our panels on teaching, research and P,F&R with other divisions, the goal being to draw from the knowledge of our colleagues so that we may continue achieving our aim of creating a deeper knowledge and understanding of religion, faith, the intersection of faith and values in American public life, religion and technology, popular culture and ethics. Our goal is to shed light upon how media cover religion – highlighting best practices – in the United States and abroad.

### **PF&R:**

At the 2013 AEJMC Meeting we will be working with other divisions to present at two PF&R panels in addition to teaching panel. We are co-sponsoring with ESIG a PF&R panel on Media and

Cultural Religion. This panel examines the religious experience from a broad array of cultural events including analysis of Museums, Sports, and Branding as religion. RMIG is also co-sponsoring with CSW a panel on celebrity, religion, and gender in the news media.

**PF&R out of conference activities**

I have not received feedback on RMIG PF&R activities outside AEJMC. But I personally have served on a panel addressing Sacred texts in Mormon culture.